**Guided Meditation –**

**Mindfulness Awareness Practice
by Pema Chodron**

This can help you settle from a busy life. It can help you be here now. We may have been speeding around and busy and this can help us to sit here, and be relaxed here so we can listen to the teachings. It is hard for our minds sometimes to be here.

(BELL)

So sit as comfortably as you can on a meditation cushion or on a chair.

Keep the eyes open but let the gaze be soft and downwards, about 4 – 6 feet in front of you. That is to say not looking down close to you, but out a little, so there is something open about the gaze.

In particular feel the front of your body as open, the whole heart area is open, so in that way you sit up as comfortably as you can. If you find yourself slumping you can just lift up and open up the heart area again, as slumping can feel like covering over the heart . In this way the posture is symbolic of an open heart. It is also symbolic of courage and bravery and willingness to just be here now. Here now with a fully open heart.

It is useful if we can get grounded in our bodies. So start becoming aware of your body. Start from the souls of your feet and slowly, very slowly move your awareness up your legs and through your whole body, moving upward to the top of the head. We not thinking about our body, we are actually feeling our body. Notice particularly any areas of tension. If there is any tension then pausing at that place, just relax. Relax any tension you become aware of as much as you can, then continue moving on up towards your head.

(PAUSE FOR A WHILE)

When you reach the top of your head, slowly again move down the body. Remember we not thinking about our body, this is actually feeling our body, feeling our face, and neck, shoulders, torso, arms and hands, slowly move down towards you feet, slowly feeling your body as you go. Do this in your own time, but when you arrive again at the souls of your feet then shift your awareness to your breath.

(SHORT PAUSE)

Begin to be aware of your breath going outwards. Then there is a kind of pause as your breath comes in. Then your breath goes out again. Mindfulness and awareness of the breath going out. Just coming back again and again to the breath going out. Breath goes out into space, feel the breath going out into space, then there is a kind of waiting, a gap, then the breath goes out again. Just coming back again and again to the breath going out. Following the breath, dissolving out into space.

(SHORT PAUSE)

Thoughts will come up in your mind. Your attention will wander, and when you realise your attention has wandered and you are talking to yourself, then, just very simply, with tremendous gentleness, and a ‘no big deal’ quality, just bring your awareness back to the breath going out.

When you realise that your mind has wandered off you can say to yourself thinking . This is not saying that thinking is right or wrong, it is just acknowledging thinking is occurring, and then come back again to the feeling of the breath going out.

(PAUSE AGAIN)

(SILENT TIME)

(BELL)